NUMB. CX.

The SPECTATOR.

...rror ubique animos, ſimul ipſa ſilentia terrent. Virg.

Friday, July 6. 1711.

AT a little Diſtance from Sir ROGER's Houſe, among the Ruins of an old Abby, there is a long Walk of aged Elms; which are ſhot up ſo very high, that when one paſſes under them, the Rooks and Crows that reſt upon the Tops of them ſeem to be Cawing in another Region. I am very much delighted with this Sort of Gloom, which I conſider as a kind of natural Author to that Being who ſupplies the Wants of his whole Creation, and, in the beautiful Language of Scripture, feedeth the young Ravens that call upon him. I like this Walk the better, becauſe of an Report it lies under of being *haunted*; for which Reaſon (as I have been told in the Family) no living Creature ever walks in it beſides the Chaplain. My good Friend the Butler deſired me with a very grave Face not to venture myſelf in it after Sun-ſet, for that one of the Footmen had been almoſt frighted out of his Wits by a Spirit that appeared to him in the Shape of a black Horſe without a Head; to which he added, that about a Month ago, one of the Maids coming home late that Way with a Pail of Milk upon her Head, heard ſuch a Ruſtling among the Buſhes that ſhe let it fall.

I was taking a Walk in this Place laſt Night between the Hours of Nine and Ten, and could not but fancy it one of the moſt proper Scenes in the World for a Ghoſt to appear in. The Ruins of the Abby are ſcattered up and down on every Side, and half covered with Ivy and Elder-Buſhes, the Habitations of ſeveral ſolitary Birds which ſeldom appear but at Midnight, or by their Appearance till the Duſk of the Evening. The Place was formerly a Church-yard, and there ſtill remain ſeveral Marks in it of Graves and Burying-Places. There is ſuch an Eccho among the old Walls and Vaults, that if you ſtamp but a little louder than ordinary you hear the Sound repeated. At the ſame Time the Walk of Elms, with the Croaking of the Ravens which from time to time are heard from the Tops of them, looks exceeding Venerable. Theſe Objects naturally inſpire Seriouſneſs and Attention; and when Night heightens the Awfulneſs of the Place, and pours out her ſupernumerary Horrours upon every thing in it, I do not at all wonder that weak Minds fill it with Spectres and Apparitions.

Mr. *Lock*, in his Chapter of the Aſſociation of Ideas, has very curious Remarks to ſhew how by the Prejudice of Education one Idea often introduces into the Mind a whole Set that bear no Reſemblance to one another in the Nature of things. Among ſeveral Examples of this Kind he produces the following Inſtance. *The Ideas of Goblins and Sprights have really no more to do with Darkneſs than Light; yet let but a fooliſh Maid inculcate theſe often on the Mind of a Child, and raiſe them there together, poſſibly he ſhall never be able to ſeparate them again ſo long as he lives, but Darkneſs ſhall ever afterwards bring with it thoſe frightful Ideas, and they ſhall be ſo joyned, that he can no more bear the one than the other.*

As I was walking in this Solitude, where the Duſk of the Evening conſpired with ſo many other Occaſions of Terrour, I obſerved a Cow grazing not far from me, which an Imagination that is apt to *ſtartle* might eaſily have conſtrued into a black Horſe without an Head; and I dare ſay the poor Footman loſt his Wits upon ſome ſuch trivial Occaſion.

My Friend Sir ROGER has often told me with a great deal of Mirth, that at his firſt coming to his Eſtate he found three Parts of his Houſe altogether uſeleſs; that the beſt Room in it had the Reputation of being haunted, and by that Means was ſhut up; that Noiſes had been heard in his long Gallery, ſo that he could not get a Servant to enter it after eight a Clock at Night; that the Door of one of his Chambers was nailed up, becauſe there went a Story in the Family that a Butler had formerly hanged himſelf in it; and that his Mother, who lived to a great Age, had ſhut up half the Rooms in the Houſe, in which either her Husband, her Son, or Daughter, had died. The Knight ſeeing his Habitation reduced into ſo ſmall a Compaſs, and himſelf in a Manner ſhut out of his own Houſe, upon the Death of his Mother ordered the Rooms to be flung open, and *exorciſed* by his Chaplain, who

who lay in every Room one after another, and by that Means diſſipated the Fears which had ſo long reigned in the Family.

I ſhould not have been thus particular upon theſe ridiculous Horrours, did not I find them ſo very much prevail in all Parts of the Country. At the ſame Time I think a Perſon who is thus terrify'd with the Imagination of Ghoſts and Spectres much more reaſonable, than one who contrary to the Reports of all Hiſtorians ſacred and prophane, ancient and modern, and to the Traditions of all Nations, thinks the Appearance of Spirits fabulous and groundleſs: Could not I give my ſelf up to this general Teſtimony of Mankind, I ſhould to the Relations of particular Perſons who are now living, and whom I cannot diſtruſt in other Matters of Fact. I might here add, that not only the Hiſtorians, to whom we may joyn the Poets, but likewiſe the Philoſophers of Antiquity have favoured this Opinion. *Lucretius* himſelf, though by the Courſe of his Philoſophy he was obliged to maintain that the Soul did not exiſt ſeparate from the Body, makes no Doubt of the Reality of Apparitions, and that Men have often appeared after their Death. This I think very remarkable; he was ſo preſſed with the Matter of Fact which he could not have the Confidence to deny, that he was forced to account for it by one of the moſt abſurd unphiloſophical Notions that was ever ſtarted. He tells us, That the Surfaces of all Bodies are perpetually flying off from their reſpective Bodies, one after another; and that theſe Surfaces or thin Cafes that included each other whilſt they were joined in the Body like the Coats of an Onion, are ſometimes ſeen entire when they are ſeparated from it; by which Means we often behold the Shapes and Shadows of Perſons who are either dead or abſent.

I ſhall diſmiſs this Paper with a Story out of *Joſephus*, not ſo much for the Sake of the Story it ſelf, as for the moral Reflections with which the Author concludes it, and which I ſhall here ſet down in his own Words. 'Glaphyra the Daughter of King *Archilaus*, after the Death of her two firſt Husbands (being married to a third, who was Brother to her firſt Husband, and ſo paſſionately in Love with her that he turn'd off his former Wife to make Room for this Marriage) had a very odd kind of Dream. She fancied that ſhe ſaw her firſt Husband coming towards her, and that ſhe embraced him with great Tenderneſs; when in the Midſt of the Pleaſure which ſhe expreſſed at the Sight of him, he reproached her after the following Manner: *Glaphyra*, ſays he, thou haſt made good the old Saying, That Women are not to be truſted. Was not I the Husband of thy Virginity? have I not Children by thee? How couldſt thou forget our Loves ſo far as to enter into a ſecond Marriage, and after that into a third, nay to take for thy Husband a Man who has ſo ſhamefully crept into the Bed of his Brother? However, for the Sake of our paſſed Loves, I ſhall free thee from thy preſent Reproach, and make thee mine for ever. *Glaphyra* told this Dream to ſeveral Women of her Acquaintance, and died ſoon after. I thought this Story might not be impertinent in this Place, wherein I ſpeak of the Kings: Beſides that, the Example deſerves to be taken Notice of, as it contains a moſt certain Proof of the Immortality of the Soul, and of Divine Providence. If any Man thinks the Facts incredible, let him enjoy his Opinion himſelf, but let him not endeavour to diſturb the Belief of others, who by Inſtances of this Nature are excited to the Study of Virtue.

In Yeſterday's SPECTATOR, *inſtead of* Ab non *in the Motto, read* ——abnormis.

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